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6 September 1985

Dear Harold,

I favor HALV or HIDV for the same reasons as you state in your letter of August 19. I would also be willing to accept HTLV-III, HTLV-3 or HTLV-3/LAV for historical reasons. Let us not forget that the term human T-lymphotropic virus as the generic term for the virus (cf. specific isolates LAV-1, IDAV-2, etc.) was first proposed by Barré-Sinoussi et al. and was accepted and adopted by Gallo's group with the suffix III to distinguish it from the human T-cell leukemia virus of the same initials.

I am strongly opposed to names not beginning with H (e.g. ARV) as nearly all other retrovirus names start with the host species initial. I am also strongly opposed to HT4V because the international workshop on leukocyte cell surface antigens has changed T4 to CD4, and this is gradually spreading in usage among cellular immunologists (that is why we reluctantly adopted it in our receptor paper).

I do not foresee long lasting difficulties in changing the name to HALV or HIDV, despite the use of HTLV-III or LAV in some of the commercial antibody tests.

Sincerely yours,



p.p. R A Weiss